



## News Release

*Communications New Brunswick*

### **NB Human Rights Commission**

## **Something can be done about racial discrimination (07/09/05)**

NB 1102

Sept. 5, 2007

FREDERICTON (CNB) - Something can be done about racial discrimination, says Dr. Gordon L. Porter, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. It is not just a fact of life that we must learn to live with.

"We would like New Brunswickers to know that something can be done about racial discrimination and harassment," Porter said. "Recent attacks on Chinese students in Saint John are disturbing. Since they were criminal actions, the police and the courts were involved. However, there are times when a person may feel they have been discriminated against but it does not involve a criminal offence. In those cases, they can file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission."

The *Human Rights Act* of New Brunswick prohibits discrimination and harassment based on 14 grounds, including race, colour, national origin, place of origin or ancestry. The act applies to employment, housing, public services, publicity or certain associations.

For example, an employer may not refuse to hire someone because they speak with a Chinese accent, or because they are black. Also, race-based insults, bullying and other types of racial harassment are not allowed in school or in other public services.

The complaint process is free, and it is illegal to punish or penalize someone for filing a complaint. It is not necessary to be a citizen to file a complaint.

The commission investigates and attempts to settle complaints of discrimination. If a complaint seems to be supported by the evidence and a settlement cannot be negotiated, a human rights board of inquiry can be appointed to hold a hearing. It is a type of tribunal. If a board of inquiry decides that there was discrimination, it can issue various orders, including monetary damages. For example, a landlord can be ordered to offer of an apartment to someone who was refused an apartment and an employer can be ordered to rehire someone who was fired.

The Human Rights Commission works to prevent discrimination by informing people of their rights and responsibilities under the Human Rights Act and by promoting respect and appreciation of diversity. The commission has several publications, including a new pamphlet on the complaint process: <http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/Human-Rights-Complaint-Process.pdf>. The commission has also been doing outreach so that multicultural associations and other stakeholders are familiar with its activities.

"We want people to know they can take action if they are discriminated against. New Brunswick has a

strong Human Rights Code and we are here to make it work for everyone," Porter said.

The commission's website also provides information about racism and how to combat it:  
<http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/sayno.htm>

07/09/05

MEDIA CONTACT: Francis Young, N.B. Human Rights Commission, 506-453-2308 or 1-888- 471-2233; <http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/index.htm>.

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